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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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IN *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 8.56 attention was called to a pamphlet entitled *Latin and Greek in Education*, consisting of articles by members of the faculty of the University of Colorado, published as *University of Colorado Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 9. Since, in spite of the generous offer of the University to supply copies, without charge, to all who are interested, so long as the edition lasts, it may well be that not all of our readers have seen the pamphlet, an indication of part at least of its contents may be of interest and value. It may be noted here, that in spite of all that has been printed in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* concerning the value of the Classics, its readers, in letters to the editor, are often asking for fresh material on this topic. Twice lately I have been asked to supply matter of this sort to be used in a very definite effort which an individual is making in a very definite sphere in support of the Classics.

Professor Lawrence W. Cole, of the Department of Psychology, discusses, in a very interesting way, the claims made that Latin and Greek are excellent disciplines of a liberal education and a splendid preparation for professional and technical training. In support of these claims he finds a host of witnesses of whose credibility there can be no question—Lord Kelvin, Karl Pearson, Matthew Arnold, Bryce, Lowell, Barrett Wendell, Professor Grandgent, Brunetière, and Anatole France. Not a single one of these men has had professional interest in the Classics. Their testimony, Professor Cole continues, has been confirmed by the results of wholesale experiments, both here and abroad, to educate the young without the aid of the Classics. These experiments have all been failures. Many professors of the sciences prefer as students those who have had training in Latin and Greek. In the field of psychology Professor Cole himself finds that the sophomores whom he tries to induct, in large numbers, into the secrets of psychology do better work if they have had training in the Classics.

The difficulty, so far as I can define it, lies in this. Besides learning to see objects, the student must learn to make nice but definite discriminations, must form certain general notions, and must, above all things, learn to detect relations. Now analysis, generalization, and relational thinking are developed and trained above all things else by the study of Latin and Greek. For this reason, your classicist is always an educated man. He finds in psychology a subject both of training and information, and he promptly goes to the deeper levels of that information. Others

obtain as much information from the subject as their previous training and their industry permit. (See page 13).

On the question of formal discipline Professor Cole, a psychologist, be it repeated, takes a very vigorous position, affirmatively, far more vigorous than that adopted by Mr. Jenner in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 8.26-29. Since, he says (14), the first group-experiments designed to measure the effect of discipline and the amount of its transfer failed to find transfer, transfer was denied and the existence of such a thing as discipline was gravely suspected.

Now we know that the wrong conclusion was drawn from the experiments. The conclusion should have been not that transfer does not occur, but that *the method used was too crude to detect it* <the italics are Professor Cole's: so are the footnotes>. Careful individual experiments have recently been made and Ebert and Meumann¹, Coover and Angell², Winch³, Bennett⁴, Fracker⁵ and others have found transfer of discipline in marked degree. The doctrine of "no-transfer" is exploded⁶ and if its former advocates do not admit the explosion openly they do so tacitly in their recent writings.

There is positive transfer, *i.e.*, increase of one mental ability by training another, and in some cases, negative transfer, or decrease in some ability due to long exercise of others, and this, I believe, was exactly the opinion held by sensible men before the cry of "no-transfer" was raised. Once it was raised it was used to bolster up the most extravagant claims of all sorts of educators. One teacher of education denied even the fact of training of special mental powers by their own exercise. It was all a beautiful example of loading the negative results of hasty group-experiments with positive conclusions, for which "scientific accuracy" was claimed.

¹Archiv f.d. gesamte Psychologie. IV, 1904.

²Amer. J. of Psych. XVIII, 1907.

³Winch, W. H. Brit. J. of Psych. II, 1908.

⁴Bennett, C. J. Formal Discipline, N. Y. 1907.

⁵Fracker, G. C. Psych. Rev. Monog. Supp. IX, 1907.

⁶Recently British psychologists have renewed the attack on the problem and with refined mathematical methods. All but one of the investigators find a greater per cent of correlation than can be ascribed to chance or error. Moreover, the correlations arrange themselves in a hierarchy, thus giving evidence, the authors say, of a "common fund of energy" or general intelligence which may be exercised in a variety of types of mental work. This is a startling return to an old belief. Yet it must still be emphasized that neither the experimental method used in testing for correlation nor the mathematical treatment of the results is well enough established to justify its use as a foundation for educational dogma. To this opinion the British investigators subscribe. But if the method is still not adequately verified, what shall we say of the crude experiments of fifteen years ago? Their use suggests vividly the remark of Hodgdon: "Whatever you are totally ignorant of assert to be the explanation of everything else". This is, of course, quackery in education, as it was in philosophy, but the quackery has worked too well. We surely need to discriminate between the educational mountebank and the expert in education. In the present state of our knowledge the latter is characterized by the fact that he, first of all, *avoids* doing great harm.

The claims of Latin and Greek rest so much on a belief in their disciplinary value that the "no-transfer" propaganda was almost the last nail in the coffin of the classics. The worst effect is that discipline has no longer been aimed at in high schools, by either teachers or pupils. The course of study has as often been a mélange of novelties as a group of subjects whose mastery required industry. Little wonder that Professor Grandgent calls our educational present "The Dark Ages".

Professor John B. Ekeley, Professor of Chemistry, discussing the Classics as a Training for the Scientist (16-19), begins by declaring that, in his experience, the assumption that the scientific world regards classical studies as of slight value is unfounded. He knows many scientists and engineers who value the study of the Classics not only for the pleasure they derived from them, but also for the intellectual power they gained from them. One very prominent mining engineer has told him that the Classics taught him "how to use the tools of his profession". He himself believes in the study of the Classics and its continuance in the University for those who contemplate a scientific or technical career, partly because such study alone leads to the broadest conception of life, partly because such study is a simple means, most easily carried out, of acquiring that precision of thought and exactness of expression which is so necessary for the future scientist or engineer. Both of these goals are the aim of any well-balanced education. True enjoyment of life is possible only through a knowledge and understanding of those subtleties of life, those intangible pleasures which come from literature, art, music, philosophy, none of which can be truly appreciated without a broad training in the Classics. The scientist especially needs these things, particularly as a balance for preserving his mental equilibrium. "The intellectual arrogance of the humanist is only exceeded by that of the scientist". How does the study of the Classics make a man a better engineer? It is very clear, says Professor Ekeley (17-19):

Our methods of secondary education have recently suffered rather severe and just criticism from those who have observed their shortcomings. Continued additions to the curriculum of the high school, usually made by the courses which give a smattering of half a dozen sciences, have wasted the time of the students at a period when they should have been acquiring habits of study and not have been confused by being introduced to too many new conceptions. Their time has been largely wasted in acquiring hazy ideas of a few elementary principles of chemistry, a subject for which, by reason of their youth, they are hardly prepared. How much better it would be for them to exercise their minds upon some task adapted to their state of mental development. Here are two languages—Greek and Latin, difficult to master, but holding out to them difficulties with which their minds are prepared to grapple. The training offered is such that it develops in them a sense of intellectual power, a sense which certainly is diminished when they fail to appreciate the true significance, let us say, of atomic weights, no matter how well they are taught. Habits of clear thinking and exact expression develop in them, these being the logical result of the mastery of the intricacies of the grammar and of the putting of the thought of

the ancient writer in the words of their mother tongue. Does an attempt to express a necessarily vague idea of a modern theory of solutions, for instance, make for habits of clear thinking and precise expression in the mind of a youth in his early teens? I feel sure that every teacher who has listened to the lame and immature attempts of an average high-school student to give a statement of some fairly simple scientific theory would much prefer to listen to his conjugation of a Greek verb.

May I repeat—a student, properly trained in the Greek and Latin languages and in mathematics, at a period when these studies by their very nature have drilled him in habits of industry, clearness of thought, have given him a feeling of mental power, and have furnished him with an invaluable foundation for a knowledge of his own language; such a student, I say, comes to the university equipped to attack successfully whatever is offered him. On the other hand, the product of some of our modern high-school methods, trained by means of a mixture of half a dozen half-baked courses in science, together with a little of this and that, feels himself overwhelmed the first month, and unless he is an unusual person, gives up in despair.

It therefore seems to me very clear that the supporters of the claims of the classics in the high school and the university have by far the better of the argument.

The paper by Professor J. Raymond Brackett, Dean of the Graduate School, and Professor of English and Comparative Literature, bears the title *The Open Door* (20-23). He holds that Greek should be taught in the Public Schools of Colorado because it is one of the most beautiful languages in existence, and because it has the richest content. In art and literature the Greeks reached higher levels than other nations, and reached them with smaller populations and in less time. He then discusses the "common delusion . . . in respect to translations", the idea that one can get Greek through translations (20).

In the summer of 1912 I spent a hot day trying to learn Thermopylae. Baedeker indicates some ruined Turkish barracks as the place where Leonidas fell. Our leader, a noted archaeologist, gave the details of the advance and retreat to this spot. I looked at the knoll with incredulity; Roosevelt's rough riders could rush the point hundreds abreast. Putting Baedeker in my pocket, I detached myself from the party, and, camera in hand, began to search for a pass between the mountain and the sea. Having found a place that seemed right, I made my pictures and waited months for confirmation. I found a translation of the account of the battle by Herodotus; there were several important places in the narrative where I felt that I must have the original words—the Greek. Three or four Greek words here and there at crucial points gave me my Thermopylae—a Thermopylae that Baedeker or archaeologist could not give or take away. Every word of Herodotus is an open door, opened to show you the battlefield by one who had seen it. Every word of the translation closes an open door and puts a strange word in its place; and this strange word is sometimes not a door at all but an obstruction. The translator had never been at Thermopylae; he could not see through the open doors of Herodotus. We sometimes imagine that a translator, if of equal ability with the original writer, can give us a translation equal to the original; but even such an uncommon translator might fail in fidelity because he does not have the experience of the original writer, and, therefore, cannot see through his open doors. What I have said of Thermopylae is likely to be true of any investigation

about which a man is deeply in earnest. I was pleased to learn that the only scientific surveyors of Thermopylae, Leake, and Grundy, went through much the same process and arrived at the same result.

If there is a chance for misapprehension in such tangible things as rocks and cliffs, plains and sea, how much greater chance for error in treatment of the invisible things, seen only by the mind's eye? Longinus on the sublime, Aristotle on art and poetry—such great works are places in which to grow, to look long at the open doors, glimpsing great thoughts that may be obscured or eclipsed by the best translator.

C. K.

(To be Continued)

GREEK POETRY IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS¹

In an article entitled *The Business of a College Greek Department*, in *The Classical Journal*, 9. 111-121, Professor Clarence P. Bill raises a question which deserves careful consideration by Greek teachers—the advisability of teaching Greek literature through translations, in courses where knowledge of the original is not required.

About five years ago I sent a questionnaire to one hundred classical scholars and teachers in Universities, Colleges and Preparatory Schools, to which there were thirty-nine actual answers from thirty-seven different institutions. The eighth question was: Do you believe that the Classics are helped in actual value to education or in maintaining their standing in education by the giving of courses in art, literature, etc., where no knowledge of the original is required? Those voting yes outright were 11 in number; 8 thought them helpful to a limited extent. Three regarded such courses doubtfully as of value for literature. One believed in them, but not as a help to the Classics. This gives a total of 23. Over against these were 9 nays, 1 no for literature, who thinks this fad overdone, 1 who favored such a course in archaeology, 4 who favored it for art—16 in all. Those decidedly voting yes or no are about 11 to 9; the others are practically undecided.

One of the ripest scholars of the Middle West writes:

Yes. This is better than leaving so many young people entirely ignorant of things classical, i.e. of the benefactions made to the modern world by the Greeks and the Romans.

¹I give here the major part of the letter which Professor Penick sent with his paper. It supplements in important particulars the paper itself.

C. K.

"As you will see from a casual reading of the enclosed article on Greek translation courses, I have made no effort to argue the question, but have given instead what some of my students have said. These statements were made after the completion of the course and no one was called upon to say anything except what he actually felt. I think the views are all genuine.

I would much rather teach the original and do teach both Greek and Latin, but am willing to sacrifice myself to the extent of one course for what I believe to be the good of the cause. We make every effort to avoid having this course interfere with the regular Greek courses and I think we succeed. It is not allowed until the Junior year, a time when no student is likely to begin a language. We cannot hope to enroll in classical study any who take this course, but we can enlist their interest and co-operation in promoting the Classics among younger students whom they may know and teach later. Even if we do not get students into our classical courses as a result of this course, we do not keep any out, and we do give many a *taste* of those good things that would otherwise be denied them *in toto*."

Another writes:

They are, indirectly. No general course such as here contemplated can replace first-hand knowledge. But we can reach adults by these means, and engender in them respect for the knowledge of the Classics, and thereby create the demand that these things be taught to their children.

Here is another answer:

Yes, I believe with all my heart in courses in Greek literature in translation. I have had an extended experience of seven years with such courses and am thoroughly pleased. One objection made to such courses is that the student is not getting the masterpieces in the original. But I would contend that, even when he gets his Pindar at 60 lines a day, he is not getting it in the original in most cases. He is after all only getting a translation, to be sure his own translation, but a translation for all that. The original can only be got by feeling the Greek in Greek.

From the far West comes this reply:

I believe in such courses, but I do not think they help the Classics. Without them, however, large numbers of present-day students would get no insight into the character of ancient civilization.

We read from the far East:

Yes. Such a course is given in . . . University this year, and is very successful.

For several years a course entitled *Greek Poetry in English Translation* has been given here. At first the course was given experimentally two hours a week, but was soon allowed to become a full course of three hours a week. Last year it was made an advanced course, which means that a prerequisite of two English courses is required, amounting in practically every case to a restriction to Juniors and Seniors. The number in the class has varied from 15 to 25, and that without any canvassing for numbers and without any advertisement outside of the Greek school announcements, where non-Greek students rarely ever look. The class has grown through the loyalty of those who have taken the course. No knowledge of Greek is required, but some who have had Greek take the course and express high appreciation of the pleasure and the profit received. The fall term is devoted to epic poetry, the winter term to lyric, the spring term to dramatic poetry. Practically all of the Greek poetry known to us is read and studied as literature. From this literature the Greeks are studied in every relation of life—domestic, social, business, legal, artistic, religious. Effort is made to show something of what is lost in translation. The stress, of course, must be placed on the content rather than on the form, but the students must learn that the greatness of the Greeks was in form, both in art and in language, as well as in content, and thereby, in some small measure, come to appreciate the beauty of that which they miss.

My only argument will be quotations from letters written by those who have completed the course, in response to my request for a statement as to whether they thought such a course was worth while and as to what specific value they received from the course.